

NBI launches energy efficiency project

The National Business Initiative (NBI) has announced the launch of the Private Sector Energy Efficiency (PSEE) project, aimed at encouraging all South African businesses to understand their impact on the environment and to participate in energy efficient initiatives.



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The NBI was awarded £8.6m (in excess of R100m) by the UK government through its Department for International Development to implement a countrywide programme of support for energy efficiency improvement to the private sector.

Joanne Yawitch, CEO at the NBI, says the main aim of the PSEE is to improve levels of energy efficiency among commercial and industrial companies in South Africa. "The PSEE is targeted to work with about 60 large companies and just over 1 000 medium-sized companies to support the awareness and uptake of best practice in energy management and energy efficiency by South African industry."

Management neglected

"The management of energy is often neglected by business, even though there is considerable potential to reduce costs through energy savings. While this does make absolute business sense; without an effective energy management policy in place, many of these opportunities tend to be overlooked," says Yawitch.

She says companies that do implement effective energy efficiency improvements in their business can improve business productivity, competitiveness and innovation as well as gain access to energy efficiency financial subsidies and tax incentives.

The PSEE project will be governed by a multi-stakeholder steering committee led by the Department of Energy and with support from the UK's Carbon Trust, which will be leveraging its experience of similar programmes in the UK in order to provide technical support to the PSEE team.

Excellent track record

Over the past eight years, the NBI has participated in and implemented a number of projects to assist South African businesses to improve their levels of energy efficiency through initiatives such as the Voluntary Energy Efficiency Accord, the Carbon Disclosure Project and Energy Efficiency Leadership Network (EELN).

"The NBI was awarded the PSEE project on the basis of its excellent track record in energy efficiency and green projects, due in part to the successful formulation and launch of the EELN. The EELN has to date secured 58 signatories among SA's biggest corporates, including international mining houses, fuel companies, banks, parastatals and retailers," says Yawitch.

"South Africa is historically a fossil fuel based economy, dependent on coal and oil. While this has begun to change due to an increasing pressure from rising energy prices, climate change legislation and the need to be seen as environmentally responsible by customers and stakeholders, there is still a long way to go and we are confident that the PSEE is the platform to drive this change," concludes Yawitch.

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